

SENATOR ANITA BOWSER



NEW JOBS on the horizon for Hoosiers

While the country continues to resonate with the effects of the national recession, Indiana has made strong progress in job creation and economic development.

According to the Indiana Department of Workforce Development, Indiana's seasonally adjusted payroll in June of 2004 grew by 4,100 jobs. This is the sixth consecutive month Indiana has experienced employment growth in comparison to the same period last year.

And, more jobs are on the horizon. According to IU's Center for Econometric Model Research, Indiana will create about 44,000 new jobs by early next year.

The Indiana Department of Commerce has received 151 inquiries from site selection consultants requesting information about relocating to Indiana. This compares with 140 inquiries for the same time last year, indicating a growing interest in Indiana by companies looking to relocate or expand existing facilities.

- 44,000 -
Number of new
Hoosier jobs
expected by 2005

- 6 -
Consecutive
number of months
of job growth

- \$23 Million -
Investment by
American Signature
in the new LaPorte
county facility



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Dear Friends,

The latest statistics indicate that more than 43 million people are uninsured in the United States, and the cost and availability of quality healthcare is a growing concern for every American.

Living without health insurance is not just a symptom of unemployment. Working families, small business owners, and temporary employees suffer as well, with 80% of those uninsured living in a family with at least one family member employed full- or part-time.

In Indiana, an estimated 687,700 Hoosiers, or nearly 13% of the state's population, are uninsured. Health care costs to Hoosier companies have risen 10% from 2003.

I am very concerned that Hoosiers do not receive the quality healthcare they need and deserve to maintain healthy and productive life styles and families.

As the General Assembly prepares for the 2005 legislative session, I encourage you to contact me or a member of my staff by calling toll-free 1-800-382-9467 ext. 2-9506 with any concerns you have regarding the rising cost of healthcare or other issues of importance to you. Together, I believe we can find the solutions to these problems and make a difference.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

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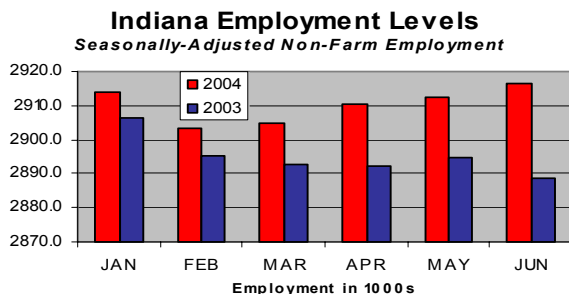
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REPRESENTING SENATE DISTRICT 8
INCLUDING LA PORTE AND ST. JOSEPH COUNTIES

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Recognizing this growth, *Site Selection Magazine* reported in its May 2004 issue that Indiana received the “2003 Competitiveness Award” which is based on ten criteria tracking job and business growth each year. The Hoosier state earned 146 points, while second-place Kentucky earned 114. The award can be partly attributed to the passage of comprehensive tax restructuring legislation in 2002, which eliminated some business and inventory taxes and increased the research and development tax credit from 5 percent to 10 percent.

In 2003, the legislature made unprecedented investments in job creation activities, including a \$75-million investment in Indiana’s 21st Century Research and Technology Fund, the creation of a venture capital tax credit, and funding for certified technology parks. As a result, Indiana has leapt forward with a modern tax structure that attracts new businesses and encourages the expansion of current businesses.



Locally, American Signature, Inc., announced in June that it will invest \$23 million in a new, 517,000-square-foot facility at Eastgate Industrial Park in LaPorte, creating 195 new jobs. The facility is scheduled to open in early 2005 and will serve as a distribution center for the company’s Midwest region stores.

Indiana is making progress that is paying off in real jobs for Hoosiers. I will continue to work for the passage of progressive legislation to further Indiana’s economic development efforts.

Sentencing policy study committee looks at overcrowding

The General Assembly has established a special study committee to examine Indiana’s sentencing laws and policies. Among other things, the panel has been directed to study inmate populations in state-run correctional facilities and to study the availability of sentencing options for nonviolent offenders such as work release and home detention programs.

As there are several Department of Correction (DOC) facilities in LaPorte County, the committee’s findings and recommendations to the 2005 General Assembly could significantly impact our area.

It is certainly no secret that many DOC facilities are often overcrowded and understaffed. When this happens, it works to the detriment of everyone – inmates, correctional staff, and taxpayers.

Legislators and other state officials should also take a serious look at the safety and compensation which we provide to our correctional officers. Every day, we ask these men and women to put their lives on the line to protect us and to provide safety and security in our correctional facilities. While the committee has not been specifically directed to examine these issues, know that I will continue to address these concerns and seek improvements.

For more information on interim committees, log on to www.in.gov/legislative/interim or call 317-232-9856.

Bowser Appointed to Interim Study Committees

This summer I will be working on several legislative study committees, including:

- **Interim Study Committee on Professional Licensing and Consumer Issues** is studying minimum mandatory training standards for firefighters, certification of emergency management organizations and professional emergency managers, predatory gasoline pricing, and mortgage lending policies.
- **Child Custody and Support Advisory Committee** is examining child support and higher education expenses for students enrolled in college, the implementation of the Title IV-D program, and the review of child support guidelines adopted by the Indiana Supreme Court.

Addressing the rising cost of prescription drugs

State programs help keep medications available to Hoosiers with low and fixed incomes

According to a recent study, approximately one out of three Americans under the age of 65 were without health insurance for all or part of 2002 and 2003. Even more Americans live without prescription drug coverage because their health insurance does not include drug coverage from their private or public benefit programs. AARP predicts that the rising trend in pricing will continue to concern and threaten the health of American consumers as these prices outpace inflation, a fact particularly troubling for those on modest and fixed incomes.

Serving the uninsured

During the past legislative session, the General Assembly approved House Enrolled Act 1251 to create a Regional Drug Repository Program. Now underway, this program organizes the collection and redistribution of unused prescription drugs to nonprofit health

clinics serving the uninsured, indigent, or underinsured. Pharmacies, health care clinics, and other facilities serve as repositories, accepting drug donations from health care providers, hospices, and hospitals. The donated prescription drugs are then available at a low or no cost

to health clinic patients under a physician's order. The program will provide a relief in prescription drug costs to state and federal programs that serve low income patients while increasing the availability of prescription drugs to those in need.

***1 out of 3
Americans under
65 were without
health insurance
in 2003***

Expanded discounts for Hoosier seniors

HoosierRx is Indiana's Prescription Drug Program for low-income seniors that provides discounts on prescription drugs for eligible seniors. Recent changes to the federal Medicare drug discount program have prompted changes in the state's HoosierRx program.



When using their HoosierRx Drug Card, enrollees will now receive a 75% discount off the cost of prescriptions. The new maximum benefit for current HoosierRx enrollees has been increased from

\$1,000 to \$1,200. New enrollees will also receive 75% off the cost of prescriptions, but maximum benefits will be based on when they apply.

If a senior is already enrolled in the HoosierRx program, it is in their best interest to also sign up for a Medicare-Approved Drug Discount Card because it offers a larger discount. The HoosierRx Card can provide important supplemental assistance to seniors after they reach the maximum benefit of their Medicare-Approved Drug Card.

WANT MORE INFORMATION?

HoosierRx

1-866-267-4679
www.in.gov/HoosierRx

Medicare

1-800-633-4227
www.medicare.gov

How will Hoosier students pay for college?

The CollegeChoice 529 Investment Plan is a qualified tuition program that offers an exceptional opportunity to save and invest for the future college expenses of any Indiana child.

Indiana residents can enroll in the age-based investment option by calling 866-400-7526, or logging on to www.collegechoiceplan.com.

- ⇒ 60% of students have to borrow money to pay for their undergraduate degree
- ⇒ \$15,375 is the average student debt upon graduating from a four-year public university
- ⇒ 43,766 participants were in the CollegeChoice Plan as of May 2004



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Methamphetamine Abuse Task Force seeking solutions

The recently created Methamphetamine Abuse Task Force has begun work and has scheduled a hearing in Starke County on August 26, which will be held in the Knox Community Center from 10:00 a.m. until noon. This task force has brought together experienced individuals from law enforcement, social services, retail businesses, emergency response teams, courts, and the legislature. Subcommittees have been created in each specialty area and recommendations for realistic, effective, immediate and long-term solutions are forthcoming.

Education and coordination of law enforcement, emergency responders, and social service providers is essential for communities dealing with the growing public health threat of methamphetamine (meth). It is important that first responders who are called to the scene of a meth lab are able to identify it as such, contact police, and ensure the safety of bystanders.

Nearly all precursors used in the illegal production of meth are readily available in retail stores. Discussions have focused on methods of regulating the sale of pseudo ephedrine, an ingredient in most over-the-

counter cold medicines. This is the only component that is absolutely necessary in the production of meth. Suggested actions include enacting legislation to require pseudo ephedrine to be available by prescription only or requiring manufacturers to package the product with no more than 12 doses per package. Indiana law limits the sale of pseudo ephedrine to three boxes per customer, but some packages contain up to 96 doses.

The task force was created under House Enrolled Act 1136, a measure that I co-sponsored last session. Recommendations will be submitted to the Legislative Council by October 31.

If you suspect a meth lab in your community, contact your local law enforcement agency or report it to the Indiana State Police Meth Hotline at 1-800-453-4756. For additional information, the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute maintains a website with information on meth at www.in.gov/cji/meth.

For more information on the August 26 meeting, feel free to contact my office at 1-800-382-9467, ext. 2-9496.